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No. XV.

SUPPLEMENT TO Mr. STAUNTON'S PAPER ON HIS CUTTING-PRESS FOR STATIONERS.

PRINTED IN THE SECOND PART OF VOL. XLIX. PAGE 165.

1 *Craven Street, Strand,*
Nov. 20, 1835.

SIR,

IT having been suggested that some further explanation of my improvement on the Stationer's Cutting-Press (rewarded by the Society of Arts, &c. in their session of 1832–33) might be useful to the public, you perhaps will allow me, in continuation of the subject, to make some additional remarks; in doing so, I am aware that, to the practical workman, I can give little information— the simplicity of the improvement will be evident to him at the first glance; to the amateur, and those who are inclined to a knowledge of mechanical art, the additional remarks may be acceptable.

Before I proceed, it will be necessary that a short description of the cutting-press should be given, and also the manner in which it is generally used (nearly the same operations applying to books as well as to paper).

The press consists of two cheeks, each about three feet two inches long, four inches thick, and five inches and a half wide; within five inches of each end of the cheeks two screws are passed horizontally: to the right hand of each screw holes are drilled, for the purpose of inserting an iron pin, with which the article to be cut is screwed tight; on the top of the left cheek is a groove, in which the left cheek of the cutting-plough travels, and forms a guide for the knife, which is fixed in the right cheek of the plough: the two ends of the press rest upon ledges fixed within the shaving-tub, which is generally about two feet nine inches from the ground. In large workshops, a frame-work of considerable length is used.

I must here beg to draw the attention of the public to an improved cutting-press, rewarded by the Society in the session of 1804-5, invented by Mr. Hawkins. It is surprising that this press, so simple, should have remained dormant so long. I do not mean to say that it is adapted to perform all the work of a stationer, in respect to cutting paper, &c.; but, certainly, there being only one screw, instead of two, is an improvement, and must tend to a saving of time; and, also, the cheeks not being required so long, it takes up much less room in a workshop. (Messrs. Richard and Wilson, of St. Martin's Court, have one of these presses in use,—perhaps the only one practically brought before the public.)

I may be allowed to remark, without any reflection on mechanical genius, that, although the operation of cutting paper is a work of great labour, nothing has been introduced that tends to reduce it; and there can be no doubt that we are now moving in the same track as our ancestors did when the press was invented. It is true, that many facilities have been made use of to assist particular branches of the trade, but nothing towards a reduction of labour *where precision is necessary*. A machine was introduced some years back, and used for the purpose of cutting the edges of paper for paper-hangers; but, since the introduction of machine-papers (which are brought into the market with the edges smooth and fit for use), it is little used: this machine is not of the least service to the stationer for any other purpose.

Having described the cutting-press, I will proceed to explain the operation of cutting the edges of paper in the common way. The usual quantity cut at one time is half a ream (some expert workmen will take a ream), the quantity to be cut off the front edge is marked with compasses towards each end; the paper is then knocked up with the back or folded part on the cheek of the press, keeping the smoothest end towards the workman, who then with his left hand places a cutting-board at the back or behind the paper, and drops it between the cheeks of the press, and with his right hand tightens the screws; he then adjusts it so that no part stands higher than the other, which depends principally on the correctness of the eye; he then screws it tight, and the paper is ready for cutting. The paper, having been cut in front, is generally, although not necessarily, taken out of the press, and the backs and fronts reversed in alternate quires, and the smoothest end, which is the next to be cut, is then knocked up on the cheek of the press, taking care that the backs and fronts are even; it is then dropped into the press and adjusted, as before described; no compass-marks are required, this part being adjusted by the eye of the workman; he then compasses the length, as in the first instance, to cut off the rough end, and the work is complete.

To a spectator, the operation of cutting the edges of paper may appear very simple, but such is not the fact. The consumers of paper often complain that it is not cut straight, and the first shops in the trade are liable to this complaint: every thing depends upon the eye and care of the workman; being generally task-work, it is to his interest to be expeditious, and in being so he is liable to lose sight of the necessary care and attention required.

It was to obviate some of the difficulties above described, which induced me to turn my attention to the subject. In respect to the labour, or mere operation of cutting, I have not been able to effect any reduction; but in facilities which I have introduced towards assisting the workman, I flatter myself I have succeeded.

With my improvements, rewarded by the Society, the workman requires no compasses, very little depends upon the eye, and, which is of great importance, where expedition combined with certainty of correctness is necessary, any quantity of paper which the press is capable of containing within the cheeks may be cut at one and the same time, if the workman has fixed the knife properly and can depend on it. The work executed before the Committee, —namely, the cutting of twelve dozen copy-books at one operation of screwing up, and also of four half-reams of 16mo. note-paper at another (performances that no workman in the trade would attempt in the old way successfully), — must be proof sufficient of the utility of the improvement.

The first operation with the improvement is,—the slide or bed (on which the article to be cut is rested) is to be adjusted by the rules inserted in the scale-board to the required length; any quantity of paper which the bed is capable of containing may be dropped upon it; the cutting-board is then placed at the back in the usual way, and the press screwed tight. The fronts having been cut, the bed is again adjusted, so as to cut off the rough end first instead of last, as in the old way; that operation having been performed, the workman may either raise the bed a little, or, by laying a loose board, about three-sixteenths of an inch thick (to be allowed for in setting the scale to cut off the rough end) upon the surface of the bed, will enable him to cut the smooth end without altering the scale a third time.

If the Society should think these additional remarks worthy of consideration, and likely to be useful to the public, I shall feel gratified in having performed a duty due to them who considered my former communication worthy of their notice, and who rewarded the improvement with their Large Silver Medal.

I am, Sir, &c. &c.

MICHAEL STAUNTON.

A. AIKIN, Esq.
Secretary, &c. &c.

No. XVI.

GRAPHIC TELESCOPE.

The Thanks of the Society were presented to Mr. C. VARLEY, 1 Charles Street, Clarendon Square, for the following description of his Graphic Telescope and Microscope.

SIR,

THE graphic telescope for which I some years since obtained a patent, received, during the existence of, and subsequently to, the expiration of the patent, so many modifications, as to be in some respects a new instrument.

Though it has been noticed in several publications, no complete or intelligible description of it has yet been